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The Official Stamps of the United States.

Simultaneous with the issue of this number of the JOURNAL, the Franking Privilege which has been enjoyed by our officials for a period of eighty-two years, will cease to exist; and hereafter each department of the government will have to pay postage on all matters sent through the mails, the same as private persons, with the exception that special stamps have been prepared for the use of the various officials, and to describe these stamps is the object of the present paper. Before proceeding to our task we shall endeavour to give a short history of the use of the Franking Privilege, and the causes which lead to its fall.

The second Congress of the United States met in Philadelphia on the 24th of October, 1791. George Washington was President John Adams was Vice-President, and Jonathan Trumbull was speaker of the House of Representatives. The first act passed by this body related to "certain fisheries of the United States," and the second was an act to establish the post-office and post-roads within the United States. This act contains thirty sections, and was approved February 20, 1792. Among other things it provided:

"That the following letters and packets, and no other, shall be received and conveyed by post, free of postage, under such restrictions as are hereinafter provided; that is to say all letters and packets to or from the President or Vice-President of the United States; and all letters and packets, not exceeding two ounces in weight, to or from any member of the Senate

or clerk of the House of Representatives, during their actual attendance in any session of Congress, and twenty days after such session. All letters to and from the Secretary of the Treasury and his assistant, Comptroller, Register, and Auditor of the Treasury, the Treasurer and Secretary of State, the Secretary of War, the commission rs for settling the accounts between the United States and individual states, the Postmaster General and his assistant; Provided, That no person shall frank or enclose any letter or packet, other than his own; but any public letter or packet from the department of the Treasury may be franked by the Secretary of the Treasury, or the assistant secretary, or by the Comptroller, Register Auditor, or Treasurer; and that each person before-named shall deliver to the post office every letter or packet enclosed to him, which may be directed to any other person, noting the place from whence it came by post, and the usual postage shall be charged thereon."

This law was altered every few years, and each time large numbers of public officials were added to the free list, till at last the loads of unpaid mail matter so embarrassed the post-office revenue, that strenuous exertions were made to do away with the whole system, which were happily crowned with success last winter.

The advantage to the post-office department of being paid for all the work done by it, is of course apparent; but what benefit it derives from going to the expense of engraving and printing stamps and selling them to itself for its own clerks to cancel, is more than we can understand. We can clearly see the advantage of having a set of stamps to be sold exclusively to the other departments of the government; but as account is kept of the quantity of the stamps supplied to each, fail to understand the saving to the post-office department in going to the expense of providing a separate set for each. It is stated this system will prevent robbery, and that the stamps can only be used by the department for which they were intended; but this is all nonsense, as for instance, we have some of the Treasury department stamps, suppose we place one on a letter and post it, what means has the postmaster for finding out that the letter was not written by the Treasury department? he dare not open it, so provided the stamps could be obtained, they could be used by any one having the desire to do so. These difficulties will doubtless soon cause the distinctive sets to be abandoned, and it is not likely that any one set will be kept, as it would look rediculous for the WarDepartment to be using the Agricultural Department stamps, or *vice versa*. This multitude of names has been tried on the revenue stamps without success which gives us additional grounds for expecting a uniform official series for all departments before long.

We will now proceed to describe the various stamps:

AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENT.

Central medallion and value same as on same values of regular issue; DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE above, U. S. in upper right hand corner, value below.

1, 2. 3, 6, 10, 12. 15 and 30 cents, straw.

EXECUTIVE.

Central medallion and value same as on same values of regular issue ; EXECUTIVE above U. S. in upper corners.

1, 2, 3, 6 and 10 cents, carmine

INTERIOR.

Central medallion and value same as on same values o regular issue ; DEPT. OF THE INTERIOR above : stars in upper, U. S. in lower corners.

1, 2, 3, 6, 10 12, 15, 24, 30 and 90 cents, vermillion.

JUSTICE.

Central medallion and value same as on same value of regular issue ; JUSTICE above, DEPT. in left, OF in right upper corner.

1, 2, 3, 6, 10, 12, 15, 24, 30 and 90 cents, purple.

NAVY

Central medallion and value same as same values, regular issue; NAVY DEPT. above ; stars in upper, U. S. in lower corners.

1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 10, 12, 15, 24, 30 and 90 cents, blue.

POST OFFICE.

Numeral of value and OFFICIAL STAMP on white ground in centre ; POST OFFICE DEPT. above, value below, dots in upper, U. S. in lower corners.

1, 2, 3, 6, 10, 12, 15, 24, 30 and 90 cents, black.

STATE.

Central medallion and value same as same values, regular issue; DEPT. OF STATE above ; U. S. in lower corners.

1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 10, 12, 15, 24, 30 and 90 cents, green.

Profile of Seward in oval ; DEPARTMENT OF STATE above, value below, U S. OF A. in lower angles.

2, 5, 10 and 20 dollars, head black, frame green.

TREASURY.

Central medallion and value same as same values, regular issue ; TREASURY above, U. S. in left, DEPT. in right upper angles.

1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 10, 12, 15, 24, 30 and 90 cents, red.

WAR.

Central device and value same as same values, regular issue; WAR DEPT. above, U. S. in upper corners.

1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 10, 12, 15, 24, 30 and 90 cents, red.

ENVELOPE STAMPS.

We understand that sets of stamped envelopes will be prepared for each department, but so far orders have been only given for the following:

POST OFFICE.

Numeral of value and OFFICIAL STAMP in oval; POST OFFICE DEPT, in white letters in solid bands above, value below, U. S. in circles at sides, oval.

2, 3 and 6 cents, black on lemon paper.

WAR.

Central medallion same as same values of regular issue; WAR DEPARTMENT above, value below.

1, 2, 3, 6, 10, 12, 15, 24 and 30 cents, red, on white, lemon and salmon paper.

The Stamped Envelopes, Sheets and Wrappers of the United States.

(*Continued from page* 106.)

No.	Value.	Normal Color.	Knife.	Size.	Paper.	Quality.
283	90	carmine,	P.	3 15-16x8⅞	cream,	2
284	6c.	red,	"	4⅛x10¼	white,	1
285	"	"	"	"	cream,	1
286	12c.	violet,	"	"	white,	1
287	"	"	"	"	cream,	1
288	15c.	orange,	"	"	white,	1
289	"	"	"	"	cream,	1
290	24c.	purple,	"	"	white,	1
291	"	"	"	"	cream,	1
292	30c.	black,	"	"	white,	1
293	"	"	"	"	cream,	1
294	90c.	carmine,	"	"	white,	1
295	"	"	"	"	cream,	1

RULED ENVELOPES.

296	1c.	blue,	Q	3 1-16x5½	white,	1
297*	"	"	"	"	amber,	1
298*	2c.	brown,	"	"	white,	1
299	"	"	"	"	amber,	1
300	3c.	green,	"	"	white,	1
301	"	"	"	"	amber,	1
302	"	"	"	"	cream,	2
303	"	"	"	3⅛x5½	white,	1
304	"	"	"	"	amber,	1
305	"	"	"	"	cream,	2
306	"	"	"	3½x6⅜	white,	1
307	"	"	"	"	amber,	1
308	"	"	"	"	cream,	2

*Officially printed, but never issued to the public.

FAINT LINED ENVELOPES.

309	3c.	green,	O	2¾x5½	white,	1
310	1c.	blue,	"	3 1-16x5½	"	1
311	"	"	"	"	amber,	1
312	3c.	green,	"	"	white.	1
313	"	"	"	"	amber,	1
314	"	"	"	"	cream,	2
315	"	"	"	3⅛x5½	white,	1
316	"	"	"	"	amber,	1
317	"	"	"	"	cream,	2
318	"	"	"	3½x6⅜	white,	1
319	"	"	"	"	amber,	1
320	"	"	"	"	cream,	2

NEWSPAPER WRAPPERS.

321	1c.	blue,	—	6¾x9½	manillia.	—
322	2c.	brown,	—	"	"	—

GENERAL CONCLUDING REMARKS.

The ruled and faint-lined envelopes are exceedingly scarce, especially so, the latter. Both now are obsolete, and the currency they enjoyed was very brief. Their early rejection is thus officially accounted for: "That the RULING (black lining and faint lining) of stamped envelopes was discontinued on the 1st July, 1871, under Act of Congress prohibiting all printing, except a printed request to return the letter to the writer." Extract from letter from W. H. H. Terrell, 3d Ass't, P. M., Gen'l, May 25, 1872.

The ruled envelopes are generally found with "Western Franks" upon them. All the ***dark buff*** circular envelopes (so-called) are ungummed.

The 7c. has never been issued on *white* for public use. If (?) it has appeared on white, it must have been in the form of proof or specimen.

The variety of the 10c .usually called *black*, is erroneously so-termed. Careful examination by the government color compounder, pronounces it to be the veritable chocolate, but *set* four times its ordinary strength.

How they treat Broken Packages in the London Post Office.

There is no savor of Yankee baggage-smashing in this account of the tender manner in which accidentally broken parcels are treated in the London Post office ; and this was at Christmas, too, when there is a great rush of mail matter. They are borne away to a side table, which is called the "hospital"; and in this Post Office infirmary two surgeons dexterously stitch up their wounds, set all their broken limbs in splints, and in fine cure such of them as are at all curable in a marvelous short space of time. Some of the patients seem past cure.

A box of real roses sent from France to Scarborough, has got broken, and some of the leaves fall on the surgeon's table as the delicious odor scents the air. With tender fingers he handles the beautiful bouquet, and let us hope the fair one whose bosom it will adorn to morrow night, will scarcely be cognizant of the mishap. The trussed fowl in this package has not been seriously injured, nor has the snipe in this other, but the surgeon sniffs disgust at its high condition, as he makes it fit for the road again. After all it is not so bad as the dead puppy which passed through his hands the other night. There is a smashed scent-bottle whose contents have been mainly absorbed by a chignon addressed to a married lady. A woolly dog that barks snappishly when he is handled, is half out of his paper kennel. A box of mistletoe has seriously suffered, but the doctor Gehulfe is dexterously to the front, and cherry lips may yet be kissed under it to-morrow night. Why didn't the gentleman who sent the beautiful bouquet to the lady in Surrey, enclose it in a better box ; and why, oh ! why was not the dish of larks forwarded in something more substantial than a fragile case of paper, so as to avert the amalgamation into which they had entered with the contents of Master Jack's paint box.

Sets of Unused Stamps.

	VARIETIES.	PRICE.
Alsace and Loraine,	6	$0. 0
Argentine Republic, 1862,	3	1.00
" " 1867,	3	1.00
Austria, 1861,	5	75
" 1863,	5	75
" 1867,	7	1.50
Austrian Italy, 1867,	7	1.00
Azores, 1868,	9	3.00
Barbadoes, 1861,	5	1.50
Bavaria, 1849-58,	6	1.00
" 1862,	6	1.00
Belgium, 1861,	4	50
" 1866,	8	1.25
" 1869,	9	1.00
Bergedorf,	5	25
Bermuda, 1865-73,	5	1-75
Brazil, 1866,	8	1.25
Brunswick, 1865,	5	10
Buenos Ayres, 1859-62,	5	5.00
Canada, 1860,	6	85
" 1868,	7	75
" 1870,	5	20
Ceylon, 1857,	12	6.00
" Env., 1861-9,	11	6.50
Confederate States, 1861-3,	11	8.50
" " 1863,	5	25
Denmark, 1871,	6	1.50
Dutch Indies,	5	1.00
Egypt, 1872,	7	1.50
Figi Islands, 1872,	3	2.00
" Surcharged.	3	1.00
France, 1863-9,	8	1.00
" Rep., 1870,	9	1.50
Greece, 1863,	7	75
Hamburg,	10	50
Heligoland,	4	50
Honduras,	2	2.00
Italy, 1856,	7	75
" 1863,	10	1.50
" 1870,	9	.200
Japan,	4	75
Liberia,	3	1.00
Lubec, 1859,	5	25
Maderia, 1868,	9	2.50
Mauritius, (Britania) 1856-60,	4	3.00
Mecklenburg Schwerin.	6	35
Mexico, 1864,	5	2.50
" 1867,	4	5.00
" 1866, engraved.	4	3.50
Modena, 1852,	7	50
" 1859,	5	50
Natal, 1857,	7	$15.00
" 1871,	4	1.50
Newfoundland, 1866,	5	2.00
New Granada, 1865,	6	1.50
North German Confederation, Official Stamps,	9	1.00
Oldenburgh, 1866,	5	25
Portugal, 1862,	5	1.00
" 1866,	8	2.00
Portuguese Indies,	3	75
Prussia, 1861,	6	25
" 1867,	5	25
Roumania, 1862,	3	1.00
" 1865,	3	30
" 1873,	7	1.00
Russia, 1857-64,	7	1.50
Sandwich Island, 1853,	2	1.00
" " 1864-6,	2	35
" " 1871,	3	75
Saxony, 1863,	6	10
Schleswig, Schleswig Holstein, and Holstein,	14	1.00
Servia, 1869,	8	1.00
Shanghai, 1865,	8	1.50
Sierra Leone,	5	1.25
South African Republic,	5	1.50
Spain, 1850,	5	10.00
" 1862,	6	1.50
" 1864,	6	1.50
" 1866,	7	1.50
" 1870,	13	5.50
" Official, 1854,	4	25
" " 1855,	4	20
Spanish West Indies, 1857,	4	1.00
" " " 1868,	4	2.00
" " " 1870,	4	1.50
" " " 1871,	4	1.50
" " " 1873	3	50
Sweden, 1872,	9	1.50
Switzerland, 1854,	7	2.50
" 1862-8,	13	2.50
" Envelope, 1867-8,	4	50
Turkey,	5	50
United States, 1851,	8	1.25
" " Newspaper S., 1863,	4	1.00
Uruguay, 1856,	3	6.00
" 1864,	4	1.25
Veneuzela, 1859,	3	50
Western Australia, 1865,	5	1.50

Sets of Used Stamps.

	VARIETIES.	PRICE.
Antigua,	3	$0.10
Argentine Republic, 1867,	3	40
Austria, 1867,	7	30
Austrian Italy, 1867,	6	35
Baden, 1851-7,	8	35
Bahamas,	4	30
Belgium, different issues,	15	25
Brazil, 1866,	7	25
Canada,	15	25
Cape Good Hope, 1863,	4	10
Ceylon, 1872,	8	50
Chili, 1867,	4	25
Denmark, 1871,	6	25
" Official, 1871,	3	15
Dutch Indies, 1870,	4	30
Egypt, 1867,	5	40
" 1872,	5	25
French Republic, 1849,	5	20
Germany, Southern Sts, 1852-62,	13	35
Holland, 1852-71,	18	40
Italy, 1856,	6	20
Italy, unpaid letter, 1870,	10	75
Jamaica,	7	25
Mauritius, 1861-70,	8	50
Mexico, 1868,	5	30
" 1872,	5	25
Naples, 1868,	5	25
Natal,	4	25
New South Wales, 1852,	8	3.00
" " " 1861,	3	15
" " " 1864-72,	6	40
New Zealand, 1872,	3	15
Orange States,	3	50
Portugal, 1862,	5	35
" 1871,	8	25
Queensland,	6	25
Russia,	6	25
Salvador,	4	50
Saxony, 1854,	6	20
Sierra Leone,	5	75
Spanish West Indies, 1871,	4	30
Straits Settlements, 1868,	8	40
Switzerland, 1854,	7	25
" Envelopes,	4	15
Tasmania, 1858-63	5	30
Trinidad, 1859,	4	15
Turkey,	5	25
United States,	20	25
Uruguay, 1866,	5	50
Victoria,	20	.00
Western Australia, 1865,	5	150

U. S. OFFICIAL STAMPS.

We have just received a few of the above stamps. We will send a packet of 6 varieties for 50 cents, single specimens 10 cents each, sent as received with regard to value.

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